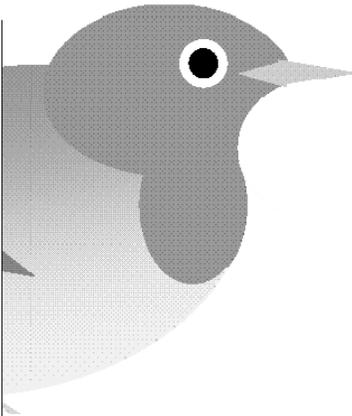
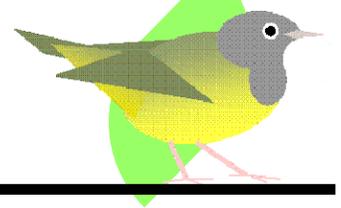


COA BULLETIN



SIXTH ANNUAL NEW HAVEN MIGRATION FESTIVAL LIGHTHOUSE POINT PARK, NEW HAVEN, CT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2008; 8 AM - 2 PM

Every fall millions of birds, butterflies and dragonflies leave their summer homes and embark on a dangerous journey to escape winter. With shorter days foretelling the colder weather to come, these intrepid travelers take advantage of tail winds provided by passing cold fronts to hopscotch their way south, some traveling as far as southern tip of South America. Geography makes Connecticut a key stop for winged travelers and Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven is among the best places in the Northeast to observe this age-old phenomenon firsthand. Tens of thousands of hawks, falcons and eagles pass over this New Haven Park each year, along with songbirds, dragonflies and butterflies.

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One of Audubon's 26 Important Bird Areas in Connecticut, Lighthouse Point Park averages the largest numbers of migrating hawks northeast of Cape May, New Jersey. Some species such as Sharp-shinned Hawks and American Kestrels reach into the tens of thousands.

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NEW HAVEN MIGRATION FESTIVAL—continued from page 1

The New Haven Migration Festival scheduled for Sunday, September 21st gives people a chance to learn about these intrepid travelers and to see live birds, butterflies and dragonflies up close. This year's event promises to be better than ever with a raptor demonstration by both Skyhunters in Flight and Wind Over Wings. This family adventure is also a great opportunity to see the ever improving bird and butterfly gardens.

“Birders have long known how amazing the spectacle of migration can be at Lighthouse Point Park,” says Patrick Comins, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut. “The Festival is a great opportunity to share this special place with everyone so they can see first hand why this city park has been named one of Connecticut’s Important Bird Areas,” added Comins. “We are very excited to be involved in such an outstanding event,” he concluded. Audubon Connecticut joins with the City of New Haven, the New Haven Bird Club, the Connecticut Butterfly Association, the Connecticut Ornithological Association, Northeast Hawk Watch, Menunkatuck Audubon, and the Connecticut Audubon Society to celebrate and enjoy one of Nature’s Greatest Shows on Earth.

Activities will include:

- A falcons in flight demonstration by Brian Bradley of Skyhunters in Flight
- Butterfly and dragonfly identification, Monarch butterfly tagging demonstrations and children’s activities led by the Connecticut Butterfly Association
- Bird walks led by the New Haven Bird Club
- A hawk and songbird flight ID workshop led by the Connecticut Ornithological Association
- Bird banding demonstrations by the Connecticut Audubon Society (see songbirds up close and personal!)
- A live raptor show featuring Wind Over Wings

About the Lighthouse Point Park Important Bird Area:

Lighthouse Point Park is one of Audubon’s Important Bird Areas because it is a major stopover destination for migrating raptors. In addition to huge numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks and American Kestrels, you may see less common raptors like Merlins, Peregrine Falcons, Northern Goshawks, and Bald Eagles, as well as a wide variety of migrating songbirds and shorebirds. Flocks of thousands of Blue Jays, Tree Swallows, and blackbirds are not uncommon. In addition, this is the only site in Connecticut where the rare Red-headed Woodpecker can be reliably seen. Not only is Lighthouse Point Park a premier birding hotspot, but it is also a popular destination for butterfly and dragonfly enthusiasts. The New Haven Parks and Recreation Department has curtailed mowing in areas of the park, so wildflowers attractive to butterflies are now in abundance. This combined with the new bird and butterfly gardens should result in an excellent turnout of butterflies.

For a complete schedule of events, please see:

<http://ctbutterfly.org/> or <http://www.newhavenbirdclub.org/>

HARTFORD AUDUBON SOCIETY CENTENNIAL FAMILY FIELD DAY CELEBRATION

Sunday, October 5, 2008

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Northwest Park, 145 Lang Road, Windsor, CT 06095

Rain or shine! Bring a picnic lunch and stay for all or part of the day. Hartford Audubon is 100 years old and we're throwing a party for the club and the general public. The emphasis is on the family - a great day for adults and children alike. Events include:

- Bird and nature walks led by experts from the club;
- Bird banding demonstration Carol Millard* and Larry Lunden;
- Activities for children - Children are welcome to participate in all of the day's events, and are invited to join some of the programs that were designed just for them including a Migration Game, Bird Quest, display where they can build a feeder. Children should stop by the information table when they arrive to pick up their Passport, where they can record all of the events and exhibitions that they have attended.
- Live animal demonstrations:
 - **Skyhunters in Flight** is an action filled educational program designed to increase awareness and enhance appreciation of birds of prey in the wild. The program explains the essential role these birds play at the top of the food chain in our environment, and outlines the skills they have for survival. Brian Bradley has been a falconer and animal trainer for over 20 years.
 - **Riverside Reptiles** - Explore the wonderful world of reptiles and amphibians! Meet various examples from these two similar, yet different groups of animals. Learn about their natural history and the importance of their conservation. You will also have a chance to pet a lizard, stare into the eyes of a giant toad, and touch a huge python! This program will be presented by Brian Kleinman is a naturalist who is passionate about giving quality educational programs about reptiles, amphibians, and other fascinating creatures of the animal world.
 - Teresa Kramer, founder of **Canton Raptor Care**, will talk on raptor rehabilitation, talking about raptors living in suburban and urban environments and how we can work together to ensure that birds of prey continue to live in New England. The birds that accompany her cannot be released back to the wild because of the nature of their injuries.
 - Gerri Griswold is the director of administration and development at the White Memorial Conservation Center in Litchfield. But she might be better known as the "Bat Lady." The Bat Lady will bring a big brown bat, a little brown bat, and a red bat. Each bat has injuries that prevent them from being released into the wild. Gerri Griswold will dispel many of the myths and teach us the truth about bats and how important these flying mammals are to our lives.
- There will be exhibits featuring information from a broad group of nature and conservation groups including land trusts, nature centers, Audubon Connecticut, invasive species, archeology, and alternative energy possibilities.

This event is FREE and open to all! Invite your family, friends and neighbors to celebrate with us. You will need to bring food and drink - picnic tables available. For more information and directions, contact Hartford Audubon Society online at - www.hartfordaudubon.org or by phone (860)-282-BIRD (2473), or contact Fran D'Amico at 203-237-2734.

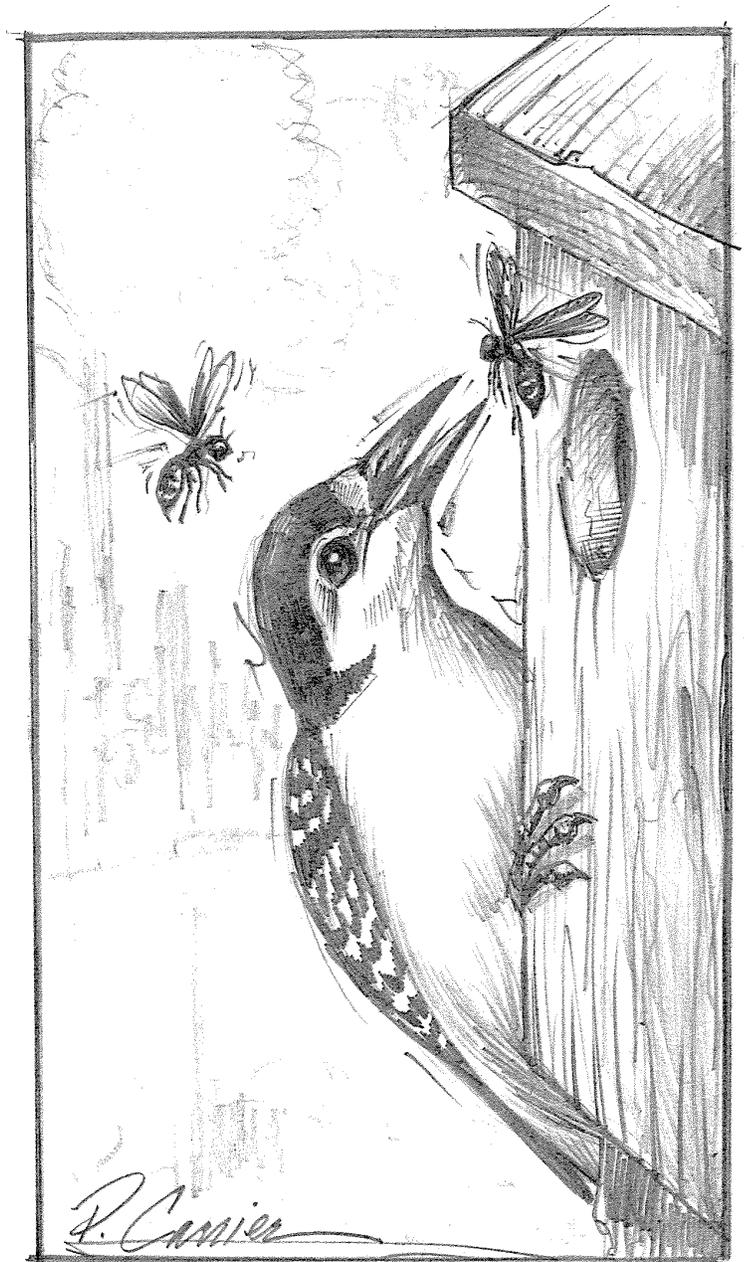
BEHAVIOR OBSERVATION:**RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*CENTURUS CAROLINUS*) SEEN CAPTURING WASPS AT NEST**

By Paul Carrier

I witnessed an interesting sighting of a Red-bellied Woodpecker this May, 2008. In the yard here in Harwinton, CT, is a large bird box 30 feet up the trunk of a red maple tree. There are no birds as of present occupying this box, but I recently noticed several paper wasps entering the hole, assuming they have a nest within. When I observed one of the two noisy male Red-bellied Woodpeckers within the yard land on this box, I became interested as to what he was going to do. This male approached upward to the box's opening and looked in. Shortly, several wasps were observed flying around the woodpecker's head. After backing down a bit from the entrance, I noticed him jabbing at the wasps, catching one, then flying down onto the tree trunk, where he killed the wasp by wedging it into a bark crevice.

Upon eating this morsel, the bird once again went to the box opening, looked in, withdrew, had 2 more wasps buzzing its head, caught one and repeated the previous procedure in killing the wasp and consuming it. I believe this woodpecker knew exactly what he was doing in arousing the wasps to their defensive flight, making them an easy capture, then repeating the act again for another easy feeding. I did not observe in detail if he ate the wasp whole or dissected them of stinger during the killing process, but I assume he has done this act before and this was one of its many methods used in procuring food.

Of the many books I searched to possibly find this behavior in woodpeckers, I found no mention of it. Also, several books describe the Red-bellied Woodpecker's diet being of animal foods up to 50% during the summer months, mentioning beetles, ants, and other Hymenoptera, but not wasps and bees specifically.



CITIZEN SCIENCE MONITORING PROJECT: SALTMARSH SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS

The University of Connecticut and Audubon Connecticut are working together to develop a citizen science monitoring project for salt marsh birds, placing a special focus on Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Audubon Connecticut's highest priority species. This species is unique in that it is one of only two birds in the world (the Seaside Sparrow being the other) that nests exclusively in salt marshes, a habitat that is seriously threatened by rising sea-levels. Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows are important indicators of salt marsh health; however, they do not receive adequate coverage under existing monitoring protocols because their secretive nature and quiet, infrequent singing style make them difficult to detect.

Fortunately, we are not as limited by this lack of data as other states. In fact, we probably have more data on the occurrence and breeding biology of this species in Connecticut than any other location in the world because of ongoing research by the University of Connecticut. In spite of this, we are lacking data for certain areas; e.g., we still know very little of this species' occurrence in the state's smaller and privately owned marshes. Moreover, estimating population trends requires long-term data for the state's most important marshes. These knowledge gaps were the motivation for our monitoring project, which is the first citizen science monitoring protocol to be focused primarily on Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

This spring and summer was planned as a pilot period, so we focused our efforts on a single site – Hammonasset Beach State Park, a global IBA for Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows. We received invaluable assistance from Menunkatuck Audubon Society, Friends of Hammonasset, and nine local birders who generously volunteered their time to do multiple surveys over the 2-month breeding season. We kicked off the project by holding a training and information session at the park, and doing the first round of surveys with the volunteers. Before the season ends, we will meet up with the volunteers to do the final survey together.

Next year, our primary goal will be to work with other states so that they can adopt our protocol. Outside of Connecticut, data on Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow occurrence are severely lacking, and data on population trends are virtually non-existent. We hope that our project will be the first step towards filling in these data gaps and implementing a range-wide monitoring scheme.

Save the Date!

What: [Invasive Plant Symposium](#)

When: Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Where: Uconn Storrs

Time: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

More Information: <http://www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/>

What: [Stratford Birding Festival](#)

When: Saturday, October 4, 2008

More Information: The Town of Stratford is planning a town-wide birding festival highlighting the key birding sites present in that town. Stratford is blessed with some of the best birding spots in the state including Long Beach, Stratford Great Meadows and the Mouth of the Housatonic River. Please contact Patrick Comins for additional information pcomins@audubon.org (203)264-5098.

What: [Annual Connecticut Forest Conservation and Forestry Research Forum](#)

When: Tuesday, November 25, 2008

Where: Uconn Storrs, Rome Ballroom

Time: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

More Information: Look for details in upcoming newsletters

BIRDING BY EAR WORKSHOP

RENEE BAADE

Sixteen people gathered for the COA's Birding By Ear Workshop on Saturday the 7th of June at Audubon Bent of the River in Southbury. Patrick Comins, director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut, was on hand to welcome us all and shared with us his birding expertise throughout the morning hike.

The Bent of the River Audubon Sanctuary provided us with a good back drop to many habitats and the species that live or just pass through there. We recorded almost 30 species before even leaving the parking lot to start our walk. Highlights: A pair of Green Herons, Northern Harrier overhead, Hooded Warbler, Prairie Warbler in the Cedar Fields, watching a pair of Worm-eating Warblers feeding along the rocky face of a woods trail, Acadian Flycatcher, and Purple Martin to name a few - 63 species in all.

After the walk, Chris Fields shared some of his sound recordings with us. We had also been able to see how this equipment worked in the field. As always we hope everyone went home knowing something they did not know before. Thanks to all the leaders and participants that helped make this workshop a success.



COA SPARROW WORKSHOP - OCTOBER 19TH

Where: Allen's Meadow, Wilton

When: Saturday, October 19

Attend the COA Sparrow Workshop to learn the basics as well as the finer points of sparrow identification. Look for additional details on this workshop on the COA web site and on CTBirds. Allen's Meadow has proven itself to be a real hotspot for sparrows, so there should be ample opportunities to study a good variety of species and a wide array of plumages.



2009 COA ANNUAL MEETING PLANNED FOR SATURDAY,
MARCH 21, 2009, AT MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

COA MEMBERSHIP FORM

JOIN COA FOR THE BEST OF BIRDING IN CT

New Member Renewal Gift

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail address* _____

COA is always in need of volunteer help. If you are interested, please check the areas below that you would like to know more about::

Computer skills Events Field trips Finance Workshops Science

Membership Category:

Student (\$15)

Individual (\$25)

Family (\$35)

Contributing (\$50)

Donor (\$75)

Benefactor (\$100)

Lifetime (\$1000; payable in 3 annual installments)

The COA Bulletin is the quarterly newsletter of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, published in February, May, September, and December. Please submit materials for the next issue by November 15, 2008, to:

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<i>Workshops</i>	Randy Domina
<i>Annual Meeting</i>	Jerry Connolly
<i>Connecticut Warbler</i>	Greg Hanisek
<i>COA Bulletin</i>	Andrew Dasinger
<i>Rare Records</i>	Jay Kaplan
<i>Refuge Relations</i>	Dori Sosensky
<i>Science Advisory</i>	Milan Bull

Visit COA on the web
at www.ctbirding.org

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